Biology, Chemistry, and Pathology of Collagen, Annals of The New York Academy of Sciences, Volume 460. Edited by Raul Fleischmajer, Bjorn Reino Olsen, and Klaus Kühn. The New York Academy of Sciences, New York, 1985, *(537 pp)*

The explosive progress made in biomedical research pertaining to the structure and metabolism of connective tissues has certainly not gone unnoticed by most investigative dermatologists. After all, the extracellular matrix of dermis is composed largely of connective tissue components, collagen, elastic fibers, and proteoglycan/glycosaminoglycan complexes. Perhaps the greatest progress in the field of connective tissue research has been achieved in understanding the biochemistry of collagen, predominantly through application of molecular technology. It is now appreciated that collagen is a family of at least 10 genetically distinct proteins, each having type-specific structural features and a characteristic tissue distribution with purported functional diversity. Most recently, studies of the genes corresponding to collagenous proteins have revealed that collagen has a complex gene structure, and some of the collagen genes consist of as many as 52 separate coding regions, exons, interrupted by noncoding sequences, introns. The primary gene products undergo extensive cotranslational and posttranslational modifications, many of which are enzymatically mediated and some of which are unique to collagen. Thus, the progress made in understanding the basic structure and metabolism of collagen has provided us with novel tools with which to explore connective tissue defects in various heritable and acquired diseases.

The progress in collagen research was reviewed at the Conference on Biology, Chemistry and Pathology of Collagen, which was held by the New York Academy of Sciences in October 1984, in New York City. This book covers the material presented in the New York meeting and is a most comprehensive account of collagen research. Extensive full-length articles cover topics including collagen structure, collagen gene structure and regulation, collagen biosynthesis, developmental biology of collagen, as well as genetic and acquired diseases of collagen. In addition, there are almost 50 brief communications corresponding to material presented in poster sessions. Besides presenting solid research data, many of the investigators embarked on more speculative areas, roadmapping the direction of research for the future. Although the text was published well over a year after the initial conference, and a considerable amount of new information has been gathered since the 1984 meeting as a result of the rapid pace of the connective tissue research, this textbook provides solid baseline information on collagen. This information should be of interest not only to researchers in the collagen field, but also to investigative dermatologists who are interested in the understanding of the normal human development and our ability to detect and treat diseases affecting the skin.

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Management of Advanced Melanoma, Contemporary Issues In Clinical Oncology, Volume 6. Edited by Larry Nathanson, M.D., Series editor Peter H. Wiernik, M.D. Churchill Livingstone (Longman, Inc., White Plains, New York, distributor), 1986 *(272 pp. $39.50)*

Melanoma is a tumor of wide-ranging interest to multiple subspecialists including dermatologists, oncologists, surgeons, radiotherapists, and cell biologists. This monograph, volume 6 in the series "Contemporary Issues in Clinical Oncology," published by Churchill Livingstone, provides a useful addition to the field. Dr. Nathanson has assembled a group of substantial contributors to explore those areas of melanoma that primarily involve advanced metastatic disease. The monograph is organized with the first 10 chapters devoted to a review of the available conventional cytotoxic chemotherapeutic, radiotherapeutic, and surgical approaches. Included in this section is an up-to-date presentation of the role of in vivo and in vitro predictive assays that have generated substantial research interest for their potential for predicting response to chemotherapeutic agents. The availability and ease of growth of melanoma specimens has made it particularly amenable to the development of assays.

The final 6 chapters of the book were largely devoted to current experimental studies on the therapy of melanoma. In addition to being an important clinical disease, melanoma has been a biologic model for the study of the rational development of therapies for differentiated solid tumors. The sections include cytotoxic agents, retinoids, hyperthermia, specific antimelanocyte toxins, and immunotherapeutic approaches. Perhaps some of the sections of the noninvestigational cytotoxic agents are overly optimistic, but the references are exhaustive and a balanced view can be obtained.

In summary, I think this monograph is very well done and Dr. Nathanson deserves praise in assembling the information provided by this group of contributors. As is usually the case in a multiauthored monograph, some of the chapters are uneven; particularly effective chapters were written by Meyskens, Kirkwood, and Parkinson. I can recommend this volume enthusiastically. It will be very useful for anyone dealing with problems of melanoma in any of its stages, since many of the questions addressed here are frequently asked by physicians and scientists, as well as patients and their families.

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BOOKS RECEIVED

The following books have been received and may be reviewed in a subsequent issue:

Differential Diagnosis of Soft Tissue and Bone Tumors, Steven I. Hajdu. Lea & Febiger, Philadelphia, 1986.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases. Guide to Diagnosis and Therapy, Third edition, Robert C. Noble, M.D., Medical Examination Publishing Company, New York, 1985.

Principles of Dermatology, Donald P. Lookingbill, M.D., James G. Marks, Jr., M.D. W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia/London/Toronto/Mexico City/Rio de Janeiro/Sydney/Tokyo/Hong Kong, 1986.

The Chronic Effects of Repeated Mechanical Trauma to the Skin, Albert M. Kligman, Jay C. Klemme, Allan S. Susten (eds.). Allan R. Liss, Inc., New York, 1985.

Contact Dermatitis, Third edition, Alexander A. Fisher, M.D. (ed.). Lea & Febiger, Philadelphia, 1986.

Clinical Dermatology. A Color Guide to Diagnosis and Therapy, Thomas P. Habif, M.D., The C. V. Mosby Company, St Louis/Toronto/Princeton, 1985.

Practical Management of the Dermatologic Patient, Arthur Rook, Lawrence Charles Parish, John Martin Beare (eds.). J. B. Lip-

0022-202X/87/$03.50